

Fourth Sunday of Easter Sunday, May 03, 2020

The Collect: O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

First Lesson: Acts 2:42-47 read from the New Revised Standard Version Bible Anglicized.

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

43 Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. 44 All who believed were together and had all things in common; 45 they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 23 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 The Lord is my shepherd; *

I shall not be in want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures *

and leads me beside still waters.

3 He revives my soul *

and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.

4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I shall fear no evil; *

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; *
you have anointed my head with oil,
and my cup is running over.

6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, *
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Epistle: 1 Peter 2:19-25 read from The World English Bible

19 For it is commendable if someone endures pain, suffering unjustly, because of conscience toward God. 20 For what glory is it if, when you sin, you patiently endure beating? But if when you do well, you patiently endure suffering, this is commendable with God. 21 For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you† an example, that you should follow his steps, 22 who didn't sin, "neither was deceit found in his mouth." 23 When he was cursed, he didn't curse back. When he suffered, he didn't threaten, but committed himself to him who judges righteously. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness. You were healed by his wounds. 25 For you were going astray like sheep; but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer§ of your souls.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: John 10:1-10 read from the Revised Standard Version Bible

10 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber; 2 but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the gatekeeper opens; the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." 6 This figure Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. 7 So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not heed them. 9 I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: May 10th we remember Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf Prophetic Witness. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

Nicolaus von Zinzendorf was a Count of the Holy Roman Empire who always had more interest in religious matters than in affairs of court. Following studies at the pietist center of Halle, he developed his own “theology of the heart,” which placed great emphasis on a close personal relationship with the suffering Savior. This “heart religion” was not just inner emotion, however, but was to result in a life totally devoted to the Savior. “All of life becomes a liturgy,” said Zinzendorf, and even the most mundane task can be an act of worship.

Always a champion of the underdog, he granted asylum to Bohemian Protestant exiles. Following a unifying experience on August 13th, 1727, in their settlement of Herrnhut on his estate, the old church of the Unitas Fratrum (Bohemian Brethren) was reborn and developed a rich liturgical and devotional life. This Moravian Church, as it came to be called, launched pioneer mission work, first in the Caribbean and then around the world. Zinzendorf himself became a bishop, and devoted his personal fortune to furthering the work of the church.

He was an early advocate of ecumenism, and, in America, he attempted to bring Protestant denominations together in the “Pennsylvania Synods.” He was not a systematic theologian, but produced numerous theological writings, widely read in Germany. In addition to these, he was a prolific hymn writer, and many of his hymn texts remain in use today in the Moravian Church and beyond. His view of the church is summed up in his stanza:

Christian hearts, in love united,
seek alone in Jesus rest;
has he not your love excited?
Then let love inspire each breast.
Members on our Head depending,

lights reflecting him, our Sun,
brethren—his commands attending,
we in him, our Lord, are one.

(Moravian Book of Worship 1995, 673)

Let us pray. God of new life in Christ: We remember the bold witness of your servant Nicolaus von Zinzendorf, through whom your Spirit moved to draw many to faith and conversion of life. We pray that we, like him, may rejoice to sing your praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**